

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 02246 290308Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGRE-00 AID-05 EB-08 IO-13 USIA-06
COME-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
IGA-02 OMB-01 /085 W
-----291146Z 041636 /50

R 280724Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4424

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2246

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, BG
SUBJ: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR: FOOD AND AID

1. AMBASSADOR CALLED ON RECENTLY-APPOINTED MEMBER OF THE COUNCIL OF PRESIDENT'S ADVISORS FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (FOREING MINISTER) SHAMSUL HUQ ON APRIL 27. DCM ACCOMPANIED AMBASSADOR, AND HUQ HAD MFA DIRECTOR FOR THE AMERICANS AMIN-UL-ISLAM AND A STAFF AIDE PRESENT. THOUGH PURPOSE OF CALL WAS TO COVER CIEC AND RELATED MATTERS (SEPTTEL), AMBASSADOR USED THIS FIRST OFFICIAL CALL TO EXTEND BEST WISHES, DISCUSS BROAD OUTLINES OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS AND STRESS IMPORTANCE HIS GOVERNMENT AND HE PERSONALLY ATTACHED TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH. SHAMSUL HUQ REPLIED QUIETLY (AS IS HIS MANNER) BUT WITH OBVIOUS SINCERITY THAT U.S. SUPPORT WAS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

2. TO HUQ'S INQUIRY ABOUT THE STATUS OF BANGLADESH'S REQUEST FOR FOODGRAINS, THE AMBASSADOR REPLIED THAT THE FIRST 200,000 TONS HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF AN AGREEMENT HE HAD SIGNED WITH THE BDG ON APRIL 1. THE REQUEST FOR AN ADDITIONAL AMOUNT, EXPECTED TO BE 150,000 TONS, WAS BEING PROCESSED IN WASHINGTON, AND
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 DACCA 02246 290308Z

HE WAS OPTIMISTIC IT WOULD BE APPROVED QUICKLY. HE WAS NOT, HOWEVER, IN A POSITION AT PRESENT TO ENDORSE A FURTHER 150,000 TONS (TO FULFILL THE BDG'S INITIAL REQUEST FOR 500,000 TONS). THERE WERE PROBLEMS IN THREE AREAS: PORT CAPACITY, STORAGE, AND STOCK LEVELS. THE LATTER WAS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IN VIEW OF OUR MUTUAL INTEREST IN BANGLADESH'S MOVING TOWARD SELF-

SUFFICIENCY IN FOODGRAINS, WHICH WOULD NOT PROGRESS WITHOUT AN INTENSIVE BDG DOMESTIC PROCUREMENT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE AN INCENTIVE PRICE TO THE FARMERS.

3. SHAMSUL HUQ RESPONDED THAT HIS GOVERNMENT, TOO, DESIRED SELF-SUFFICIENCY AND WOULD MOVE TOWARD THAT GOAL AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. IN RESPONSE TO THE AMBASSADOR'S POINT THAT NORTH AMERICAN SURPLUSES COULD NOT BE ASSURED INDEFINITELY, HUQ RESPONDED THAT THIS WAS PART OF THE REASON WHY THE BDG SHOULD TRY TO GET AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE NOW. HE AGAIN THANKED THE U.S., AND SAID THAT THIS YEAR'S "EARLY MONSOON" AND FLOOD CONDITIONS IN SYLHET DISTRICT HAD CAUSED MAJOR CROP LOSSES. AMBASSADOR CONCLUDED BY NOTING THAT WE WOULD KEEP A CLOSE WATCH ON THE SITUATION, AND THE BDG COULD BE ASSURED OF OUR SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION IF FOOD SHORTAGES SHOULD DEVELOP.

4. ASKED ABOUT DEVELOPMENT AID, EMBASSADOR OUTLINED OUR CRITERIA, NOTED THE ADMINISTRATION'S EMPHASIS ON THE DEVELOPING NATIONS AND ON BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL AID, AND SAID WE WERE FULLY PREPARED TO CONSIDER SOAND REQUESTS, PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELD OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT.

5. COMMENT: SHAMSUL HUQ IS QUIET, INTELLIGENT AND FRIENDLY. HE IS OBVIOUSLY STRONGLY ORIENTED TOWARD WESTERN CONCEPTS AND IS AT EASE IN DEALING WITH WESTERNERS IN FLUENT ENGLISH. HE PLEDGED HIS FULL CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 DACCA 02246 290308Z

SUPPORT TO STRENGTHENING OUR RELATIONSHIP, INCLUDING REMOVING SOME ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES WE HAVE BEEN ENCOUNTERING AND ON WHICH HE HAD BEEN BRIEFED. THOUGH NEW TO THE DETAILS OF DIPLOMACY, WE EXPECT HIM TO BE A FAST LEARNER AND A PERSON WE CAN WORK WITH CONSTRUCTIVELY.
MASTERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOOD ASSISTANCE, FOREIGN ASSISTANCE, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 28-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977DACCA02246
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770150-0353
Format: TEL
From: DACCA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770411/aaaaainl.tel
Line Count: 104
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0c2c3e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2670292
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS ADVISOR: FOOD AND AID
TAGS: PFOR, EAID, BG
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0c2c3e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009